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BLM ROYAL GORGE NEWS

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Large Fossil on Display in Royal Gorge Field Office

CANON CITY, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management Royal Gorge Field Office has a large guest in our lobby. A 9' replica of the vertebra from *Amphicoelias fragillimus* is on display in the field office.

In 1877, Ormel Lucas excavated *Amphicoelias fragillimus*, a Jurassic sauropod dinosaur, 8 miles north of Cañon City in Garden Park while working for Professor E.D. Cope of Philadelphia. Believed to be the largest animal to walk the face of the Earth, *Amphicoelias* probably weighed 135 tons, was 190' long and was nearly twice the size of any other known dinosaur, reaching 30' high at its back.

The display is based on a partial vertebra that has since been lost (probably due to its fragile nature when excavated, hence its name). Paleontologist Ken Carpenter, formerly of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, constructed the replica based on data from Cope's original measurements.

The Marsh-Felch, Cleveland-Delfs and Cope quarries played an important role in Fremont County's history. Cañon City became a hotspot for Paleontology beginning in the 1870's when prominent U.S. paleontologists Othniel C. Marsh and Edward D. Cope quarried the first fossilized bones of many dinosaur species in the Garden Park Fossil Area. Since their famous "Bone Wars," during which the scientists raced to discover and name new dinosaur species, many other paleontology digs in Garden Park have provided the scientific world with irreplaceable information about the anatomy of Jurassic-aged dinosaurs and the types of environments they lived and died in.

In April 2013, the Garden Park Fossil Area's National Natural Landmark was expanded from a 40-acre designation to 3,208 acres by the National Park Service and the BLM.

The stories behind the excavations at these quarries will be told at the NNL designation celebration on Oct. 9th at the Cleveland Quarry rest area off Garden Park Road starting at 10:00

am. In the meantime, be sure to stop by the Royal Gorge Field Office to see the vertebra from *Amphicoelias*.

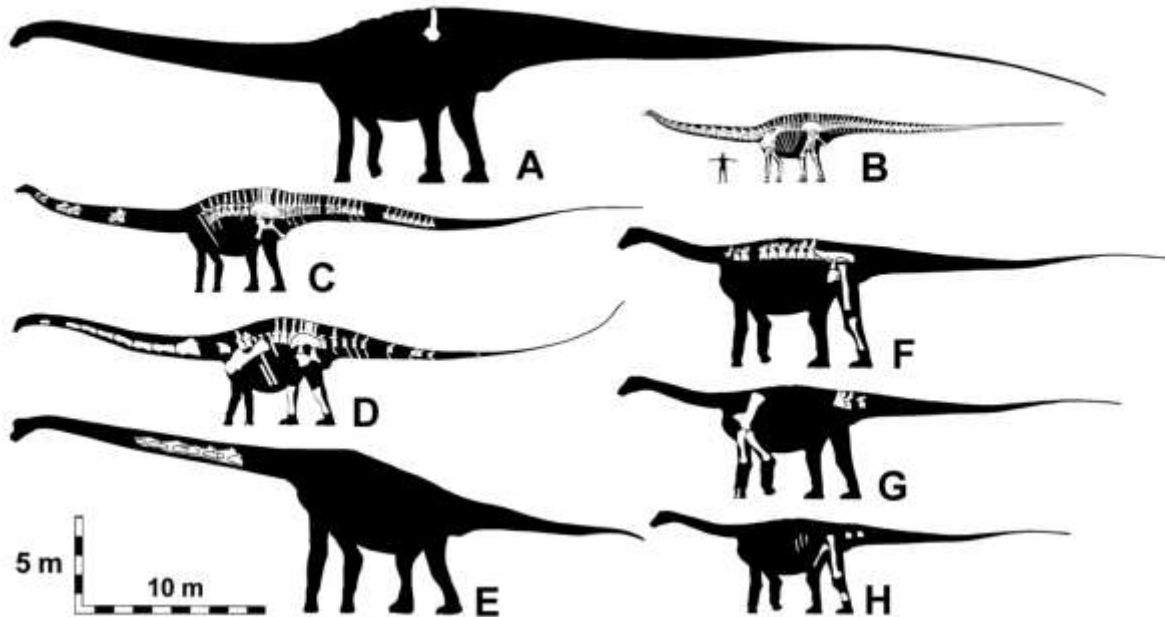


Image 1 Caption: Body size comparison of mega- and super-sauropods. A. *Amphicoelias fragillimus*; B. *Diplodocus*; C. *Seismosaurus*; D. *Supersaurus*. Brachiosaurid: E. *Sauroposeidon*. Titanosaurids: F. *Argentinosaurus*; G. *Paralattian*; H. “*Antarctosaurus*” *giganteus*. Except for *Diplodocus*, the body outlines are conjecture because of the fragmentary nature of the specimens. The titanosaurids are modeled after the titanosaurid *Saltosaurus*, rather than a brachiosaurid. Reconstructions are scaled to known bone measurements.

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